

Message Text

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ACTION INR-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-12 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
PA-02 ICA-20 SP-02 PM-05 NSC-05 SS-15 ISO-00
/089 W
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R 190820Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 729
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

UNCLAS SINGAPORE 3221

FOR INR

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: UR
SUBJECT: REACTION TO SOVIET TRIALS

REF: (A) STATE 178559, (B) SINGAPORE 3189

1. TEXT OF JULY 18 EDITORIAL IN AFTERNOON DAILY NEW
NATION FOLLOWS:

"THE RUSSIANS ARE PROVING AS DEADLY SERIOUS ABOUT
THEIR INVOLABLE RIGHT TO TRY THEIR OWN CITIZENS AS
UNITED STATES PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER APPARENTLY IS
ABOUT HIS HUMAN RIGHTS CRUSADE. MOSCOW'S TREATMENT OF
DISSIDENTS IN THE PASTN18 MONTHS HAS BEEN UNRELENTINGLY
SEVERE. EACH CONVICTED ACTIVIST RECEIVED HARSH PUNISH-
MENT. THE LIST INCLUDED SCIENTIST DR. YURI ORLOV,
LEADER OF THE GROUP MONITORING RUSSIAN COMPLIANCE WITH
THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROVISIONS OF THE 1975 HELSINKI ACCORD
ON EAST-WEST COOPERATION, ELECTRICAL ENGINEER VLADIMIR
SLEPAK AND WRITER ZVIAD GAMSAKIHURDIA. LAST WEEK,
DESPITE MR. CARTER'S UNUSUAL PERSONAL ATTEMPT TO CLEAR
COMPUTER SPECIALIST ANATOLY SHCHARANSKY OF CIA CON-
NECTIONS ON HIS TREASON CHARGES, THE DISSIDENT WAS
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GIVEN 13 YEARS HARD LABOR AND PRISON SENTENCES. HIS
ACTIVIST COLLEAGUE, ALEXANDER GINSBURG, ENDED UP WITH
EIGHT YEARS IN LABOR CAMP.
"THE TOUGHNESS WITH WHICH THE RUSSIANS HAVE SO
FAR ANSWERED MR. CARTER'S CONCERN WITH HUMAN RIGHTS
IN THEIR COUNTRY IS NOT UNEXPECTED. THEY HAVE, RIGHTLY
OR WRONGLY, ASSESSED THAT THEY ARE NOW SPEAKING FROM

A POSITION OF STRENGTH TO AN AMERICA JUST RECOVERING FROM VIETNAM, WATERGATE AND THE LEGAL EMASCULATION OF ITS SECURITY AGENCIES. BUT EVEN THIS IS NOT OF CONSEQUENCE IF THEY DO NOT PERCEIVE IN MR. CARTER'S CAMPAIGN A CHALLENGE TO THEIR POLITICAL AUTHORITY AT HOME. THE US LEADER'S PERSISTENT PUBLIC AIRING OF THE PROBLEM HAS, THUS, BROUGHT PREDICTABLE RESULTS -- A HARDENING OF THE SOVIET LINE TOWARDS DISSIDENTS AS A WARNING TO THE FEW HUNDRED OTHERS DISPERSED IN MOSCOW, KIEV, LENINGRAD AND TBILISI. THE AUTHORITARIAN POWERS CANNOT RELENT ON THEIR DISSIDENTS WITHOUT APPEARING TO WEAKEN BECAUSE OF OUTSIDE PRESSURE.

"MR. CARTER CANNOT BE UNAWARE OF THE DUBIOUS VALUE OF PUSHING ON WITH HIS ALMOST EVANGELISTIC DRIVE AT A HIGHLY VISIBLE PUBLIC LEVEL AND RISKING THE SHOWDOWN THREATENED BY THE RUSSIANS. EQUALLY, HE MUST KNOW TOO THAT HE MAY QUIETLY BUT EARNESTLY CONTINUE PUTTING HIS POINT ACROSS TO MOSCOW THROUGH CLEVER USE OF THE CONSIDERABLE VARIETY OF CARDS THE US DOES HAVE AT ITS DISPOSAL--ECONOMIC, TECHNOLOGICAL AND STRATEGIC ONES ESPECIALLY. GRANTED MR. CARTER, WHOSE INAUGURAL ADDRESS WAS DISTINGUISHED BY ITS ACCENT ON "HUMAN RIGHTS", HAS DIFFICULTY KEEPING UP A PUBLIC POSTURE. THE BELIEF THAT IF YOU SHOUT LOUD AND LONG ENOUGH THE OTHER SIDE WILL LISTEN TO YOU IN THE END

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OUGHT NOT BE ALLOWED TO CONFUSE THE MORE COMPLEX AND SIGNIFICANT ISSUES OF SALT AND DETENTE WHICH BOTH SUPERPOWERS SHOULD PRE-OCCUPY THEMSELVES WITH. MR. CARTER CAN DO THE RUSSIAN DISSIDENTS A BETTER LONG-TERM SERVICE BY FIRST SEPARATING THE CHAFF FROM THE GRAIN. HE CAN THEN SPEAK AS LOUDLY AS HE WANTS WITH MORE CLOUT AND CREDIBILITY."

INGRAHAM

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